

Wednesday's Woman

Original Chantel singer – Renée Minus White -- pens memoir

By Audrey J. Bernard
Women's Editor

Renée Minus White has penned her memoir -- *Maybe: My Memoir (One Chantel's Story)* -- her debut book released by RoseDog Books. *Maybe: My Memoir (One Chantel's Story)* is a story about the eventful life of one of the original members of **The Chantels**, the famed female rhythm and blues group; and a look at her life in and out of the music industry.

The Chantels rocked the world and the music industry during the late 1950s with hits including "Maybe," "He's Gone," "The Plea," "I Love You So," and "Look In My Eyes" and many other chart toppers. This book gives readers a glimpse of the author's childhood and what it was like growing up in the Bronx during the 1950s. She was introduced to music at a very young age as both parents were smitten with music. Her father, Leroy Minus, was a jazz pianist who fell in love and married Thelma Minus, a jazz singer. Both parents retired their show business careers to raise their

seven children.

White attended St. Anthony of Padua's Grammar School where she eventually met four young girls -- Arlene Smith, Jackie Landry, Millicent Goring and Lois Harris. They became good friends and went on to form one of the greatest girl groups of all times... The Chantels. Long before there were other girl power groups -- The Supremes, Sister Sledge, The Ronettes, SWV, Destiny's Child, En Vogue, Xscape -- there was The Chantels with five-girl harmony. They set the mold for others to follow. Their memorable tours through America's South in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement were often scary and interesting.

The Chantels are still singing and sound better than ever as they tour the country, entertaining audiences and receiving standing ovations. You can visit their website at www.thechantels.com

Maybe: My Memoir (One Chantel's Story) is an 80-page paperback with a retail price of \$21.00. The ISBN is 978-1-4809-9770-7. It was published by RoseDog Books of



Maybe: My Memoir (One Chantel's Story) book cover



Today's Chantels (L-R): Ami Ortiz, Sonia Goring Wilson, Lois Harris Powell, Renée Minus White



Original Chantels (circa 1973)



(L-R) Naomi White Randolph (daughter of Renée), Hillary Clinton & Renée Minus White during an interview at the *New York Amsterdam News* (Photo by Bill Moore)

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Visit the author's website at www.reneeminuswhite.com. For

more information, or to request a review copy, please go to our virtual pressroom at www.dorrancepressroom.com or

our online bookstore at www.rosedogbookstore.com.

About Renée Minus White



Renée Minus White

Renée Minus White, founder of RMW Enterprises, has penned fashion for Montgomery Ward's, Essence Magazine and Leavit Advertising Agency. She is the proud product of Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Today, Ms. White enjoys the privileges of an international respected journalist as the Fashion and Beauty Editor for the *New York Amsterdam News*. She is also the founder of a Time to Style, Inc., a production and communications company that produces fashion editorials, fashion shows, and presentations. She is also a licensed realtor in New York State. Presently, she is an Associate Broker with Douglas Elliman, specializing in Westchester, Riverdale and Harlem, New York, markets. White was fortunate to have met and married her late husband, Javier A. White, Esq. in 1975. They were blessed with a daughter, Naomi White Randolph, and son, Javier R. B. White. Both are married. White enjoys her wonderful grandchildren: granddaughters Soraya and Makena and grandson Javier.

About The Chantels

The Chantels are singing on the Pop and Rhythm & Blues circuit capturing audiences across the nation with their unique sound. Hear them on their new CD *Eternally*. The Chantels began their journey to stardom in 1956 by a chance meeting with Richard Barrett; lead singer of the Valentines, on New York's famed Broadway. The five girls, Arlene Smith, Renee Minus, Jacquelyn Landry, Sonia Goring and Lois Harris had attended St. Anthony of Padua Elementary School in the Bronx, New York, and were members of St. Anthony's church choir. Their unique sound was rooted in the liturgical music of that church, and the sounds of the boy groups that sang on the street corners of the Bronx. Barrett recorded the Chantels on George Goldner's End Record label. "He's Gone" backed by the "Plea" were released in 1957. The next release "Maybe" became a major national hit and made the Chantels stars overnight. The Chantels are also credited with recording the first Extended Play 45 rpm record.

The Chantels then began a series of nationwide tours with Alan Freed and "Mur-

ray the K" Kaufman. They also appeared on Dick Clark's American Bandstand. In 1959 after George Goldner's record company folded, original lead singer Arlene Smith struck out on her own. The Chantels didn't miss a beat and in 1962, released what was to become the group's highest charted record, "Look in My Eyes" on the Carlton label and Annette Smith on lead, under the direction of Richard Barrett. This was followed by the up-tempo "Well I told you" which was a top 20 hit, with Barrett on lead, and was the answer to Ray Charles' "Hit the Road Jack." In December 1997, Original group member Jackie Landry Jackson succumbed to breast cancer. Although this was a major loss The Chantels decided not to replace her. Jackie

was the heart of the group and was the glue that held The Chantels together. She is sorely missed.

Today, The Chantels, Sonia Goring Wilson, Lois Harris Powell, Renee Minus White and Ami Ortiz who joined the group in 1996, are among the most popular and requested singing groups, performing their numerous great hits. They are among the nominees for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's 2010 induction. The group's live performance in 1999 for the PBS TV special, "Doo Wop '50," which featured the best vocal group stars of the 1950's and 60's received rave reviews nationwide. The Chantels have in recent years appeared at the world famous Apollo Theater, Radio City Music Hall, The Beacon Theater, The Tarrytown Music Hall, Symphony Space and the Norfolk Music

Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all in New York; Three Rivers Stadium, White Oak American Legion and the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh, PA and numerous other venues on the East and West Coast.

The Chantels had the privilege of appearing in concert at the World Trade Center in July 2001; and also appearing in front of an audience of 125,000 Girl Scouts of America at the Washington Monument in 2002 and again in 2007 in celebration of their 90th and 95th anniversaries. These extremely talented ladies are also featured in the celebrated "Doo Wop is Alive" photo unveiled on February 3, 2000 at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC as a salute to the pioneers of the Rhythm & Blues and Doo Wop. They were greeted as the "sweethearts of the era!"



The Chantels CD "Eternally" (circa 1999)



The Chantels at the Tarrytown Music Hall (circa 2006)



The Chantels were nominated for induction to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1999 and again in 2010 (circa 2010)

Excerpt from the book:

"My mom, Thelma, always talked about the night she won the Amateur Night Contest at the Apollo and I always felt her regret for not pursuing her singing career, even though she enjoyed being our mother. The

Apollo Theater was the place where all of the famous acts appeared. It was and is a Harlem landmark and pillar for Black citizens around the world. Percy Sutton deserves every accolade for sustaining it from the '90s to the present. However, it was the Schiffman family that created the aura

around the Apollo Theater in the early '30s, '40s, and '50s. Every entertainer longed to play there and I was no different. For us, it was all about being in the right place at the right time. It was my dream to perform in front of an Apollo audience and when I finally did, I felt like I belonged there."